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## Press Release



### For Immediate Release

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### Governor Hassan Visits Great Bay Farm, Meets with Dairy Farmers to Discuss Drought

GREENLAND – As part of her efforts to support New Hampshire farmers responding to the crop losses caused by recent severe drought conditions, Governor Maggie Hassan today visited Great Bay Farm, where she viewed impacts of the drought firsthand and held a discussion with farmers and others in the agricultural industry.

“This severe drought is threatening farms across the state, and our dairy farmers have been particularly hard hit, with the drought further compounding other challenges that they face,” Governor Hassan said. “Agriculture is critical to our economy and our way of life in New Hampshire, and we must continue working to support our farmers as they deal with the negative impacts caused by the drought. We have received a federal drought disaster designation for nine New Hampshire counties, but we know that more must be done at the federal and state levels to support this critical industry during this emergency situation. I have allocated \$2 million per year for the Milk Producers Emergency Relief Fund in the agency phase of the next budget, and I hope that the legislature will take steps to provide this important support to our farmers as soon as possible.”

Governor Hassan requested a Secretarial Drought Disaster Designation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, [which has since been granted for nine New Hampshire counties](#), making farmers in those counties eligible to apply for federal assistance. The Governor also supports changes to the federal Dairy Margin Protection Program that would calculate feed costs at a regional level instead of the current national level, helping take into account the local drought conditions that are impacting New Hampshire's dairy farmers.

During the agency phase of the next budget that is presented in October, Governor Hassan will allocate \$2 million per year to the Milk Producers Emergency Relief Fund, which authorizes the New Hampshire Commissioner of Agriculture to reimburse New Hampshire producers of raw milk when the base price of milk falls below the target price.

“Since 2014, farm milk prices have fallen 38 percent, leaving dairy farms unable to cover the costs of producing milk,” New Hampshire Department of Agriculture Commissioner Lorraine Merrill said. “Even worse, this severe-to-extreme drought has resulted in crop losses that leave many farms short of feed for their cattle for the winter and unable to pay for expensive purchased feed. This crisis threatens to change the agricultural landscape and economy of the state, if we do not get emergency assistance for our dairy farms.”

The Governor also highlighted the importance of water conservation by all citizens across New Hampshire and those on public and private wells.

“This is a very important time of year for re-charging our water systems, and if the drought continues, I am concerned that some of our citizens could see their wells run dry this winter,” Governor Hassan said. “Water conservation now will help extend the life of private wells and public water systems throughout the state, and I urge all Granite Staters to take steps to conserve water, including those who live in communities that have not yet enacted water restrictions.”

For information and resources regarding the State of New Hampshire's Drought Management Program and Drought Management Team, visit [des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/](http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/dam/drought/).

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